

TWENTY-FOURTH WEEK OF ORDINARY TIME – A

September 13 – 19, 2026

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Sunday

FORGIVE AND YOU WILL BE FORGIVEN

From a Commentary by St. Augustine

The Lord puts the parable of the unforgiving debtor before us that we may learn from it. He has no desire for us to die, so he warns us: *This is how your heavenly Father will deal with you if you, any of you, fail to forgive your brother or sister from your heart.*

Take notice now, for clearly this is no idle warning. The fulfillment of this command calls for the most vigorous obedience. We are all in debt to God, just as other people are in debt to us. Is there anyone who is not God's debtor? Only a person in whom no sin can be found. And is there anyone who has no brother or sister in his debt? Only if there be someone who has never suffered any wrong. Do you think anyone can be found in the entire human race who has not in turn wronged another in some way, incurring a debt to that person? No, all are debtors, and have others in debt to them. Accordingly, God, who is just, has told you how to treat your debtor, because he means to treat his in the same way.

There are two works of mercy which will set us free. They are briefly set down in the gospel in the Lord's own words: *Forgive and you will be forgiven*, and *Give and you will receive*. The former concerns pardon, the latter generosity. As regards pardon, he says: "Just as you want to be forgiven, so someone is in need of your forgiveness." Again, as regards generosity, consider when a beggar asks you for something that you are a beggar too in relation to God. When we pray, we are all beggars before God. We are standing at the door of a great householder, or rather, lying prostrate, and begging with tears. We are longing to receive a gift -- the gift of God himself.

What does a beggar ask of you? Bread. And you, what do you ask of God, if not Christ who said: *I am the living bread that has come down from heaven*? Do you want to be pardoned? Then pardon others. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Do you want to receive? Give and you will receive.

If we think of our sins, reckoning up those we have committed by sight, hearing, thought, and countless disorderly emotions, I do not know whether we can even sleep without falling into debt. And so, every day we pray; every day we beat upon God's ears with our pleas; every day we prostrate ourselves before him, saying: *Forgive us our trespasses, as we also forgive those who trespass against us*. Which of our trespasses, all of them or only some? All, you will answer. Do likewise, therefore, with those who have offended you. This is the rule you have laid down for yourself, the condition you have stipulated. When you pray according to this pact and covenant, you remember to say: *Forgive us, as we also forgive our debtors*.

Monday

GIVE ME TO DRINK

From an Excerpt of Story of a Soul by St. Thérèse of Lisieux

One Sunday, looking at a picture of Our Lord on the Cross, I was struck by the blood flowing from one of the divine hands. I felt a great pang of sorrow when thinking this blood was falling to the ground without anyone's hastening to gather it up. I was resolved to remain in spirit at the foot of the Cross and to receive the divine dew. I understood I was then to pour it out upon souls. The cry of Jesus on the Cross sounded continually in my heart: "I thirst!" These words ignited within me an unknown and very living fire. I wanted to give my Beloved to drink, and I felt myself consumed with a thirst for souls. As yet, it was not the souls of priests that attracted me, but those of great sinners; I burned with the desire to snatch them from the eternal flames.

To awaken my zeal, God showed me my desires were pleasing to Him. I heard talk of a great criminal just condemned to death for some horrible crimes; everything pointed to the fact that he would die impenitent. I wanted at all costs to prevent him from falling into hell, and to attain my purpose I employed every means imaginable. Feeling that of myself I could do nothing, I offered to God all the infinite merits of Our Lord, the treasures of the Church, and finally I begged Céline to have a Mass offered for my intentions. Far from laughing at me, she asked if she could help convert my sinner. I accepted gratefully, for I would have wished all creatures would unite with me to beg grace for the guilty man.

I felt in the depths of my heart certain that our desires would be granted, but to obtain courage to pray for sinners I told God I was sure He would pardon the poor, unfortunate Pranzini; that I'd believe this even if he went to his death without any signs of repentance or without having gone to confession. I was absolutely confident in the mercy of Jesus. But I was begging Him for a "sign" of repentance only for my own simple consolation. My prayer was answered to the letter!... The day after his execution, I found the newspaper "La Croix." I opened it quickly and what did I see? Ah, my tears betrayed my emotion, and I was obliged to hide. Pranzini had not gone to confession. He had mounted the scaffold and was preparing to place his head in the formidable opening, when suddenly, seized by an inspiration, he turned, took hold of the crucifix the priest was holding out to him, and kissed the sacred wounds three times! Then his soul went to receive the merciful sentence of Him who declares that in heaven there will be more joy over one sinner who does penance than over ninety-nine just who have no need of repentance!"

I had obtained the "sign" I requested, and this sign was a perfect replica of the grace Jesus had given me when He attracted me to pray for sinners. Wasn't it before the wounds of Jesus, when seeing His divine blood flowing, that the thirst for souls had entered my heart? I wished to give them this immaculate blood to drink, this blood which was to purify them from their stains, and the lips of my "first child" were pressed to the sacred wounds! What an unspeakably sweet response! After this unique grace, my desire to save souls grows each day, and I seemed to hear Jesus say to me what he said to the Samaritan woman: "Give me to drink!" It was a true interchange of love: to souls I was giving the blood of Jesus, to Jesus I was offering these same souls refreshed by the divine dew. I slaked His thirst, and the more I gave Him to drink, the more the thirst of my poor little soul increased, and it was this ardent thirst He was giving me as the most delightful drink of His love.

Tuesday

THAT MY TEARS OF LOVE MAY MINGLE WITH YOURS

A Reflection attributed to Jacopo da Todi

The sorrowful mother was standing in tears beside the cross on which her Son was hanging. Her soul was full of grief and anguish and sorrow, for the sword of prophecy pierced it.

How sad now and how unhappy at the fate of her only Son was that mother, once called blessed; how the faithful mother grieved and lamented as she saw her glorious Son so shamefully treated.

Who is there who would not weep, were he to see Christ's mother in such great suffering? Or who could help feeling sympathy with the mother, were he to think of her sorrowing with her Son?

Yet she actually saw Jesus in agony and broken by the scourging, and this because of the sins of her own people. She saw her dear Son all the time he was dying and abandoned until he yielded up his soul.

Come then, mother, from whom all love springs, make me understand the meaning of your sorrow that I may mourn with you. Make my heart burn with love of Christ, my God, that he may look on me with favor.

Holy mother, do this for me. Pierce my heart once and forever with the wounds of your crucified Son. Let me share with you the pain of your Son's wounds, for he thought it right to bear such sufferings for me.

Grant that my tears of love may mingle with yours and that, as long as I live, I may feel the pains of my crucified Lord. To stand with you beside the cross and be your companion in grief is my own wish.

Virgin without equal among virgins, do not now turn down my request; grant that I may mourn with you. Grant that I carry about the dying state of Christ; grant that I be a sharer of his passion; grant that I relive his wounds. Grant that I be wounded with his wounds; grant that I drink to my soul's content of the chalice of his cross and blood. Be a defense to me, Virgin Mary, on the judgment day, and I will not burn and be consumed in the fires of hell.

When it is time, Lord Christ, for me to leave this world, give me through your mother's prayers the palm of victory. When my body is dead, grant that my soul be given the glory of paradise.

Wednesday

THE SAME UNBROKEN HARMONY

From a letter by St. Cyprian, bishop and martyr

Cyprian sends greetings to his brother Cornelius. My very dear brother, we have heard of the glorious witness given by your courageous faith. On learning of the honor you had won by your witness, we were filled with such joy that we felt ourselves sharers and companions in your praiseworthy achievements. After all, we have the same Church, the same mind. The same unbroken harmony. Why then should a priest not take pride in the praise given to a fellow priest as though it were given to him? What brotherhood fails to rejoice in the happiness of its brothers wherever they are?

Words cannot express how great was the exaltation and delight here when we heard of your good fortune and brave deeds: how you stood out as a leader of your brothers in their declaration of faith, while the leader's confession was enhanced as they declared their faith. You led the way to glory, but you gained many companions in that glory; being foremost in your readiness to bear witness on behalf of all, you prevailed on your people to become a single witness. We cannot decide which we ought to praise, your own ready and unshaken faith or the love of your brothers who would not leave you. While the courage of the bishop who thus led the way has been demonstrated, at the same time the unity of the brotherhood who followed has been manifested. Since you have one heart and one voice, it is the Roman Church as a whole that has thus borne witness.

Dearest brother, bright and shining is the faith which the blessed Apostle praised in your community. He foresaw in the spirit the praise your courage deserves and the strength that could not be broken; he was heralding the future when he testified to your achievements; his praise of the fathers was a challenge to the sons. Your unity, your strength have become shining examples of these virtues to the rest of the brethren.

Divine providence has now prepared us. God's merciful design has warned us that the day of our own struggle, our own contest, is at hand. By that shared love which binds us closely together, we are doing all we can to exhort our congregation, to give ourselves unceasingly to fastings, vigils and prayers in common. These are the heavenly weapons which give us strength to stand firm and endure; they are the spiritual defenses, the God-given armaments that protect us.

Let us then remember one another, united in mind and heart. Let us pray without ceasing, you for us, we for you; by the love we share we shall thus relieve the strain of these great trials.

Thursday

LOVE AND JUDGMENT

From the Homily of Pope Francis, 13 March 2015

The Gospel for today (cf. Lk 7:36-50) opens to us a path of hope and comfort. It is good to feel Jesus' compassionate gaze upon us, just as it was felt by the sinful woman in the house of the Pharisee. In this passage, two words persistently return: love and judgment.

There is the love of the sinful woman who humbles herself before the Lord, but before that is the merciful love of Jesus for her, which drives her to approach him. Her tears of repentance and joy wash the feet of the Master, and her hair dries them with gratitude; the kisses are an expression of her pure love; and the perfumed ointment poured in abundance attests to how precious He is in her eyes. This woman's every gesture speaks of love and expresses her desire to have unwavering certitude in her life: that of having been forgiven. And this certitude is beautiful! And Jesus gives her this certitude: in accepting her, He demonstrates the love God has for her, just for her, a public sinner! Love and forgiveness are simultaneous: God forgives her many sin; He forgives her for all of them, for "she loved much" (Lk 7:47); and she adores Jesus because she feels that in Him there is mercy and not condemnation. She feels that Jesus understands her with love, she who is a sinner. Thanks to Jesus, God lifts her many sins off her shoulders, and He no longer remembers them (cf. Is 43:25). For this is also true: when God forgives, He forgets. God's forgiveness is great! For her, a new era begins now; through love, she is reborn into a new life.

This woman has truly encountered the Lord. In silence, she opened her heart; in sorrow, she showed repentance for her sins; by her tears, she appealed to divine goodness to receive forgiveness. For her, there will be no judgment, but that which comes from God, and this is the judgment of mercy. The hero of this encounter is certainly love, a mercy which goes beyond justice.

Simon, the master of the house, the Pharisee, on the contrary, doesn't manage to find the road of love. Everything is calculated, and everything is thought out... He stands firm on the threshold of formality. It is an unpleasant thing, formal love; he doesn't understand. He is not capable of taking that next step forward to meet Jesus, who will bring him salvation. Simon limits himself to inviting Jesus to lunch, but does not truly welcome him. In his thoughts, Simon invokes only justice, and in doing so, he errs. His judgment of the woman distances him from the truth and prevents him from even understanding who his guest is. He stopped at the surface — at formality — incapable of seeing the heart. Before the parable of Jesus and the question of which servant would love more, the Pharisee responds correctly: "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more". Jesus doesn't fail to observe: "You have judged rightly" (Lk 7:43). When Simon's judgment is turned to love, then is he in the right.

Friday

WOMEN AT THE SERVICE OF THE GOSPEL

From the General Audience Message of Pope Benedict XVI

We can historically distinguish the role of the first women in early Christianity, during Jesus' earthly life, and in the events of the first Christian generation. Jesus, as we know, certainly chose from among his disciples 12 men as Fathers of the new Israel and appointed them "to be with him, and to be sent out to preach" (Mk 3: 14-15). In addition to the Twelve, many women were also chosen to number among the disciples. I can only mention very briefly those who followed Jesus himself, beginning with the Prophetess Anna (cf. Lk 2: 36-38), to the Samaritan woman (cf. Jn 4: 1-39), the Syro-Phoenician woman (cf. Mk 7: 24-30), the woman with the haemorrhage (cf. Mt 9: 20-22) and the sinful woman whose sins were forgiven (cf. Lk 7: 36-50).

In the first place, we think spontaneously of the Virgin Mary, who with her faith and maternal labours collaborated uniquely in our Redemption to the point that Elizabeth proclaimed her "Blessed... among women" (Lk 1: 42), adding: "Blessed is she who believed..." (Lk 1: 45). Having become a disciple of her Son, Mary manifested total trust in him at Cana (cf. Jn 2: 5), and followed him to the foot of the Cross where she received from him a maternal mission for all his disciples of all times, represented by John (cf. Jn 19: 25-27).

Next were women who followed Jesus to assist him with their own means, like for example: Mary of Magdala, Joanna, Susanna, and "many others" (cf. Lk 8: 2-3). Then there were women, unlike the Twelve, who did not abandon Jesus in the hour of his Passion (cf. Mt 27: 56, 61; Mk 15: 40). Among them, Mary Magdalene stands out in particular. Not only was she present at the Passion, but she was also the first witness and herald of the Risen One (cf. Jn 20: 1, 11-18). It was precisely to Mary Magdalene that St Thomas Aquinas reserved the special title, "Apostle of the Apostles" (*apostolorum apostola*), dedicating to her this beautiful comment: "Just as a woman had announced the words of death to the first man, so also a woman was the first to announce to the Apostles the words of life" (*Super Ioannem*, ed. Cai, 2519).

It is rather to St Paul that we are indebted for a more ample documentation on the dignity and ecclesial role of women. He begins with the fundamental principle according to which for the baptized: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3: 28), that is, all are united in the same basic dignity, although each with specific functions (cf. I Cor 12: 27: 30). The Apostle accepts as normal the fact that a woman can "prophesy" in the Christian community (I Cor 11: 5), that is, speak openly under the influence of the Spirit, as long as it is for the edification of the community and done in a dignified manner. Thus, the following well-known exhortation: "Women should keep silence in the Churches" (I Cor 14: 34) is instead to be considered relative.

In short, without the generous contribution of many women, the history of Christianity would have developed very differently.

Saturday

ABLE TO REST IN GOD

From Essays on Woman by St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross OCD

Becoming empty and still are closely connected. The soul is replenished by nature in so many ways that one thing always replaces another, and the soul is in constant agitation, often in tumult and uproar.

The duties and cares of the day ahead crowd about us when we wake in the morning (if they have not already dispelled our night's rest). Now arises an uneasy question: 'How can all this be accommodated in one day? When will I do this? When that? How will I start on this and that? Thus agitated, we would like to run around and rush forth? We must take the reins in hand and say, "Take it easy! Not any of this may touch me now. My first morning's hours belong to the Lord. I will tackle the day's work which he charges me with, and he will give me the power to accomplish it".

So I will go to the altar of God. Here is not a question of my minute, petty affairs, but of the great offering of reconciliation. I may participate in that, purify myself and be made happy, and lay myself with all my doings and troubles along with the gifts on the altar. And when our Lord comes to me in Holy Communion, then I may ask him, of the words of St. Teresa: "Lord, what do you want of me?" And after the dialogue, I will go to that which I see as my next duty.

I will still be joyful when I enter into my day's work after this morning's celebration: my soul will be empty of that which could assail or burden it, but it will be filled with holy joy, courage, and energy.

Because my soul has left itself and entered into the divine life, it has become great and expansive. Love burns in it like a composed flame which the Lord has enkindled, and which urges my soul to render love and to inflame love in others. And it sees clearly the next part of the path before it; it does not see very far, but it knows that when it arrives at that place where the horizon now intersects, a new vista will then be open.

Now the work of the day will follow, maybe in the fields or in the office. Maybe throughout the day, we will experience great fatigue, but we will be at peace. Keep this alive with contemplation, spiritual reading, participation in the Office and popular services. Find the best way for you, listen to expert advice, and keep close to Jesus.